

§ 2700.11 Withdrawal of pleading.

A party may withdraw a pleading at any stage of a proceeding with the approval of the Judge or the Commission.

§ 2700.12 Consolidation of proceedings.

The Commission and its Judges may at any time, upon their own motion or a party's motion, order the consolidation of proceedings that involve similar issues.

Subpart B—Contests of Citations and Orders

§ 2700.20 Notice of contest of a citation or order issued under section 104 of the Act.

(a) *Who may contest.* (1) An operator may contest:

(i) A citation or an order issued under section 104 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 814;

(ii) A modification of a citation or an order issued under section 104 of the Act; and

(iii) The reasonableness of the length of time fixed for abatement in a citation or modification thereof issued under section 104 of the Act.

(2) A miner or representative of miners may contest:

(i) The issuance, modification or termination of any order issued under section 104 of the Act; and

(ii) The reasonableness of the length of time fixed for abatement in a citation or modification thereof issued under section 104 of the Act.

(b) *Time to contest.* Contests filed by an operator pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section shall be filed with the Secretary at the appropriate Regional Solicitor's Office or at the Solicitor's Office, Mine Safety and Health Division, Arlington, Virginia, within 30 days of receipt by the operator of the contested citation, order, or modification. Contests filed by a miner or representative of miners pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section shall be filed in the same manner within 30 days of receipt by the miner or representative of miners of the contested order, modification, or termination.

(c) *Notification by the Secretary.* The Secretary, in accordance with section 105(d) of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 815(d), shall

immediately advise the Commission of such notice of contest upon its receipt.

(d) *Copy to Commission.* The contesting party shall also file a copy of his notice of contest with the Commission at the time he files with the Secretary.

(e) *Contents of notice of contest.* (1) A notice of contest shall contain a short and plain statement of:

(i) The party's position with respect to each issue of law and fact that the party contends is pertinent; and

(ii) The relief requested by the party.

(2) A legible copy of the contested citation or order shall be attached to the notice of contest. If a legible copy is not available, the notice of contest shall set forth the text of the contested citation or order.

(f) *Answer.* Within 20 days after service of a notice of contest, the Secretary shall file an answer responding to each allegation of the notice of contest.

§ 2700.21 Effect of failure to file notice of contest of citation.

An operator's failure to file a notice of contest of a citation or order issued under section 104 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 814, shall not preclude the operator from challenging, in a penalty proceeding, the fact of violation or any special findings contained in a citation or order including the assertion in the citation or order that the violation was of a significant and substantial nature or was caused by the operator's unwarrantable failure to comply with the standard.

§ 2700.22 Notice of contest of imminent danger withdrawal orders under section 107 of the Act.

(a) *Time to file.* A notice of contest of a withdrawal order issued under section 107 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 817, or any modification or termination of the order, shall be filed with the Commission by the contesting party within 30 days of receipt of the order or any modification or termination of the order.

(b) *Contents of notice of contest.* (1) A notice of contest shall contain a short and plain statement of:

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(i) The contesting party's position on each issue of law and fact that the contesting party contends is pertinent; and

(ii) The relief requested by the contesting party.

(2) A legible copy of the contested order shall be attached to the notice of contest. If a legible copy is not available, the notice of contest shall set forth the text of the contested order.

(c) *Answer.* Within 15 days after service of the notice of contest, the Secretary shall file an answer responding to each allegation of the notice of contest.

§ 2700.23 Review of a subsequent citation or order.

(a) The contesting party shall file any subsequent citation or order that modifies or terminates the citation or order under review within 30 days of its receipt. The notice of contest under section 105 or section 107 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 815 and 817, unless withdrawn, shall be deemed to challenge any such subsequent citation or order.

(b) A person who is not a party in a pending proceeding for review of a citation or order may obtain review of a modification or termination of the citation or order by filing a notice of contest under section 105 or section 107 of the Act. The notice of contest shall be filed within 30 days of receipt of the citation or order that modifies or terminates the citation or order being reviewed.

Subpart C—Contests of Proposed Penalties

§ 2700.25 Proposed penalty assessment.

The Secretary, by certified mail, shall notify the operator or any other person against whom a penalty is proposed of the violation alleged, the amount of the proposed penalty assessment, and that such person shall have 30 days to notify the Secretary that he wishes to contest the proposed penalty assessment.

§ 2700.26 Notice of contest of proposed penalty assessment.

A person has 30 days after receipt of the proposed penalty assessment within which to notify the Secretary that

he contests the proposed penalty. The Secretary shall immediately transmit to the Commission the notice of contest.

§ 2700.27 Effect of failure to contest proposed penalty assessment.

If, within 30 days from the receipt of the Secretary's proposed penalty assessment, the operator or other person fails to notify the Secretary that he contests the proposed penalty, the Secretary's proposed penalty assessment shall be deemed to be a final order of the Commission not subject to review by any court or agency.

§ 2700.28 Filing of petition for assessment of penalty with the Commission.

(a) *Time to file.* Within 45 days of receipt of a timely contest of a proposed penalty assessment, the Secretary shall file with the Commission a petition for assessment of penalty.

(b) *Contents.* The petition for assessment of penalty shall list the alleged violations and the proposed penalties. Each violation shall be identified by the number and date of the citation or order and the section of the Act or regulations alleged to be violated. The petition for assessment of penalty shall state whether the citation or order has been contested and the docket number of any contest. The petition for assessment of penalty shall advise the party against whom a penalty is filed that he has 30 days to file an answer pursuant to § 2700.29.

(c) *Attachments.* A legible copy of each citation or order for which a penalty is sought shall be attached to the petition for assessment of penalty. If a legible copy is not available, the petition for assessment of penalty shall set forth the text of the citation or order.

§ 2700.29 Answer.

A party against whom a petition for assessment of penalty is filed shall file an answer within 30 days after service of the petition for assessment of penalty. An answer shall include a short and plain statement responding to each allegation of the petition.